

Piles of rubbish cleared from M56 as National Highways supports national litter-picking campaign

The government-owned company has joined Keep Britain Tidy's 'Big Bag Challenge' and pledged to pick at least 8,000 bags of litter for this year's Great British Spring Clean.

And a targeted litter pick on Friday 1 April saw maintenance teams clear rubbish from the M56 at Junction 12 near Runcorn where they received a helping hand from Keep Britain Tidy campaigners and Mike Amesbury, MP for Weaver Vale.

National Highways has collected 60,000 bags during the previous six Great British Spring Clean campaigns and is taking part for a seventh year.

Paul Elliott, National Highways' maintenance service manager for the North West, said:

Millions of people travel on National Highways roads like the M56 every day and despite efforts like this to clear it, our network quickly becomes littered from vehicles and unsecure loads.

Litter is a serious social problem with devastating consequences for wildlife and the environment. Clearing litter from the side of roads also exposes maintenance crews to significant risk.

Our priority is to keep our roads safe and well maintained, and litter is a huge issue that we are tackling daily. We urge people to save litter for the bin, rather than throwing it on the side of the road.

Keep Britain Tidy estimates it costs around £1 billion every year to clean up litter. Litter also poses a serious safety risk on roads as verges and barriers form corridors where litter and debris build up at an alarming rate, creating a hazardous environment for road users, wildlife and the maintenance crews who clean it up.

While the Great British Spring Clean runs for a matter of weeks, National Highways picks litter throughout the year and carries out regular inspections to make sure England's motorways and major A-roads are in good condition.

Mike Amesbury, MP for Weaver Vale, said:

It was good to be out with the team from National Highways, but it's a shame they have to be there because of an irresponsible

minority of drivers. Not only is the litter unsightly but it's deadly to mammals and wildlife.

Workers are having to pick up 60 bags of rubbish every single day. And it's quite hairy having to do that exercise on motorway verges and slip roads, as well as costing money to the taxpayer that would be better spent elsewhere.

The key ask is for people to do the responsible thing and take their rubbish home for recycling or discard it in a litter bin at a service station.

Lucy Fell, account director for Amey, said:

We deliver a range of maintenance work on behalf of National Highways to help keep people moving. It's shocking to see the amount of litter on the sides of our roads.

To litter pick the side verges, we need to install lane closures to ensure safety for our operatives and the travelling public. By taking part in the Great British Spring Clean, we're encouraging everyone to save their rubbish for their bin, reducing the need for our operatives to litter pick and time better spent improving the road network.

National Highways also wants to hear from you if you spot something wrong on their roads. This could be anything from a broken sign or barrier, to litter, overgrown vegetation or potholes.

Reporting a maintenance issue to National Highways can be done [online](#) or by calling 0300 123 5000.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.